

55/4

NEW JERSEY
STAR SCHOOLS
2002-2003 APPLICATION

RESPONSES to the information below and the statements must be **ANONYMOUS**. No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school or the community. Use the words "the school" in referring to the applicant in the responses to the statements.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Alternative</u>	Grade Levels <u>7-12</u>	School Enrollment <u>50</u> Name of the School's Specialization or Whole-School Reform Model <u>School-To-Careers</u> <u>Workplace Readiness</u>
Location: <input type="checkbox"/> Urban/city; <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban with urban characteristics; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban; <input type="checkbox"/> Small City/Town; <input type="checkbox"/> Rural		
Previous Star School: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, Year(s) _____		

KEYBOARDED RESPONSES to the statements below must be no more than a total of five pages. Keyboard the statement followed by the response.

1. Describe the school's specialization or whole-school reform model and its objectives, the student educational needs and the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*,* that it addresses. Detail how it promotes high student achievement and contributes to school-wide accomplishments.
2. Describe the professional development activities and research of the school's faculty. Detail to what extent these activities contribute to exemplary teaching practices in their classrooms. Explain the link between these activities and the specialization or whole-school reform model.
3. Describe the leadership style of the school's administration and how the management and educational program demonstrate administrative and fiscal efficiency. Describe any innovative scheduling and/or management strategies implemented.
4. Describe the school's overall approach to assessment. How are your methods aligned to the specialization or whole-school reform model? How are you ensuring that the content you are measuring is consistent with the *Core Curriculum Content Standards*? Provide student performance data for the school years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 using state tests and, if you wish, national and/or district standardized norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced tests, and/or alternative assessments. Explain any dramatic increase or decrease. Specify which groups, if any, are excluded from the assessments for which you provide data. Give the percentage of students excluded. You may use a chart.
5. Describe collaborative efforts with families, business, the community, school districts, and/or higher education that contribute to a school environment governed by the students' needs and promoting high student achievement.
6. **Previous Star School Winners Only:** Provide a one-page addendum to your application that describes efforts to expand or replicate the specialization or whole-school reform model within the school and/or the district. Have there been dissemination activities beyond the school or district? If so, please elaborate.

*The 2002 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.
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*1. Describe the school's specialization and its objectives, the student educational needs and the specific Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards, * that it addresses. Detail how it promotes high student achievement and contributes to school-wide accomplishments.*

The school provides educational and workplace readiness services for junior high and secondary students referred to an alternative school setting for the following reasons: at risk and/or dropping out of school, in need of non-traditional educational schedule, poor school attendance, chemical dependence, involvement in the juvenile justice system, and inability to follow traditional methods of instruction. The objectives for each school year are the following: increase basic skills achievement in order to meet high school graduation requirements, prevent dropping out of school, provide career and vocational training, help improve attendance and punctuality and supply support services and training to develop more responsible behavior.

The following is a list of *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards /Cross-Content Curriculum Workplace Readiness Standards* and corresponding educational activities addressed by the school:

1.) Develop an understanding of the negative effects of drugs and alcohol on the human body 2.) Maintenance of proper physical conditioning through participation in a structured program that encourages active participation 3.) A greater understanding on how good nutrition, adequate rest and healthy habits can contribute to optimum physical performance and longevity of life 4.) Transition into a contributing team member 5.) Describe work that people perform in our economic system 6.) Identify examples of the rights and responsibilities of citizens 7.) Use critical thinking, decision-making and problem solving skills 6.) Use information technology and other tools 8.) Demonstrate self-management skills 9.) Write in clear, concise, organized language. 10.) Develop problem solving, decision-making and inquiry skills 11.) Develop career planning and workplace readiness

The school's purpose is to enhance success for "at risk" students not functioning in a traditional school setting. The 10-1 ratio of students (50 total) to teacher increases opportunities for powerful learning experiences and positive relationship building. The program places learning in environments that are positive physically, emotionally and socially while giving students an experience of learning through emersion. The school's ongoing learning projects involve collaborative cross content planning. The school also provides workplace readiness skills by infusing them into all academic subjects. Students use math to calculate profit margins and earnings in the daily operation of the café, communication skills are developed through radio script writing and on the air programming, biology facts are presented through the nurturing of plants in the operation of a greenhouse and conducting science experiments on the A.J. Merriwald Historic Sailing vessel while sailing down the Delaware River, cultural diversity is taught through a guest speaker lecture series of various races, religions and cultures, and health class provides exercise choices for a variety of interests. Information on career education and occupational training opportunities indigenous to our county and corresponding attitudes, skills, and requirements are disseminated to students so that they can make an educated decision concerning their future education and/or career choice. The program challenges students to expand beyond conventional classroom activities by providing opportunities to use information, technology to operate a remote radio site at their school. They also

learn to think critically, apply decision making and problem solving skills; demonstrate self-management and apply safety principles through a multitude of school sponsored activities. They include the daily operation of a school-based café, serving breakfast and lunch to community patrons; the management of a monthly coffeehouse incorporating musical performers and food service. participation in intergenerational community service projects such as an annual Valentine's luncheon/dance and community fall festival. In addition, the students are given the opportunity for job shadowing in the healthcare and hospitality and tourism industry, equestrian care at the handicap riding center, work in retail food service at a local supermarket, stock shelves at a food bank, provide horticulture care at a local farm market, get specific occupational training through a partnership with local hotel and casinos, enroll in college level courses at the local community college, participate in team building activities through project adventure and participate in a interscholastic basketball program, attend college performing arts productions, and take enrichment trips to places of high interest such as New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Washington with members of a local VFW Post. All of these learning activities as well as an intense drug, alcohol and family counseling program help students for the first time in their lives stay clean & sober, motivated to stay in school, gain enough credit to graduate and successfully transition into employment or post secondary education.

2. *Describe the professional development activities and research of the school's faculty. Detail to what extent these activities contribute to exemplary teaching practices in their classrooms. Explain the link between these activities and specialization or whole school reform.*

The faculty prepares for each school year during the summer months. During this time, the staff completes a post year assessment for the previous school year's components while adding positive suggestions for improvement for the upcoming year. In addition, the staff creates learning units derived from the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards* and *Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards*. The staff periodically critiques each other's lessons for program refinement. They meet daily during the school year to discuss students' progress, calculating students' academic and behavioral points earned during each class. Much of the staff's effort includes ongoing cross content learning projects and community service activities that involve teacher-student collaborative planning, team teaching and/or school/business endeavors.

Holistic staff development is encouraged through stress management activities incorporated in the daily schedule like group jogging and/or bike riding after school hours and periodic mental health "venting" sessions. Collective weekly staff breakfasts are scheduled throughout the school year to help maintain a strong and cohesive instructional unit.

In-service opportunities abound to meet the *Professional Improvement Unit* requirements for the instructional staff. Quarterly in-district workshops focus in on effective multiple intelligence and classroom management instructional approaches. Staff members also attend workshops sponsored by the N.J. Department of Education, Education, and Alternative School Associations, local colleges, Chamber of Commerce and the Work Investment Board on effective teaching of *Core Curriculum Content* and *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Skills*. In addition, staff members do independent research and present their findings in-house with fellow staff and at quarterly meetings

sponsored by the school for other local school educators teaching in neighboring alternative schools. In recent months, staff members have also been invited to present their ideas at the *Generation Next 2002 Conference* and the local Work Investment Board Meeting in the Fall of 2002.

In addition, instructional staff members have increased in their knowledge of the skills necessary for success in the workplace through the development of local school/business partnerships. Staff members are sent out in the field to shadow workers in businesses representing various job clusters indigenous to the region. They supervise student-workers on-site for 20 % of their instructional time (Fridays) throughout the school year. Staff and students rotate to other placements on a quarterly basis to increase in knowledge and experience, providing students a well-rounded resume of employment training experiences prior to graduation.

3. *Describe the leadership style of the school's administration and how the management and educational program demonstrate administrative and fiscal efficiency. Describe any innovative scheduling and/or management strategies implemented.*

The school has a decentralized power structure. The director acts as a facilitator instead of a conventional top-down administrator. The frontline staff has the opportunity to continually contribute to the program's development and refinement. The first staff project acted as a great team building exercise. They were given a month to get a ninety year old abandoned school up and running during the summer of 1999. Upon completion of the cleaning; painting; patching; and furniture construction, the staff contributed to the formation of the curriculum and behavior management program; screened student applicants; met with parents and ordered technology, books and other educational materials.

Staff members work as a team in sharing responsibilities identified prior to the start of each school year and updating priorities throughout the year. In addition to content area teaching, staff members have volunteered for coordination of other responsibilities such as work-site placement, job mentoring, school newspaper, school-based café, health care job shadowing, coaching, school-based radio operations, computer technology updates, horticulture activities, hospitality and tourism training and after hours family counseling. Periodic brainstorming sessions are built into the "corporate culture" encouraging teacher and parent initiated ideas such as: modified instructional school day schedule, workplace readiness activities, cross content curriculum refinement, block scheduling, character development exercises, enrichment trip ideas, activity fund expenditures, school/business partnerships, community service ideas, teacher initiated grants, and staff development activities. The teachers have been encouraged by the school's administration to evolve into educational entrepreneurs. They have been given opportunities to explore their own interests for implementation in the offering of weekly elective courses during the block schedule day, along with worksite placements. They continue in the development of their skills and talents through attending local, state and regional workshops with the approval and reimbursement from the administrative staff.

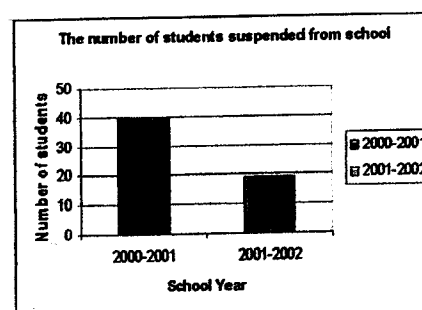
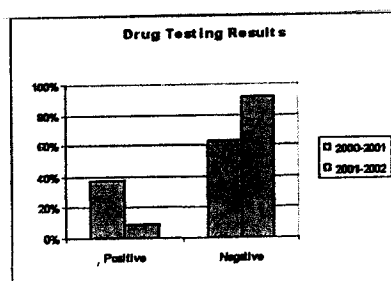
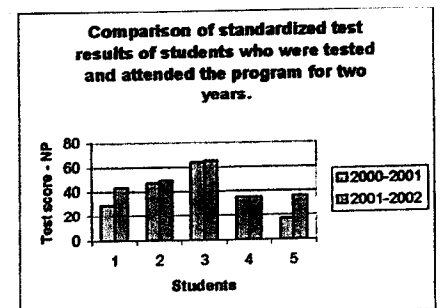
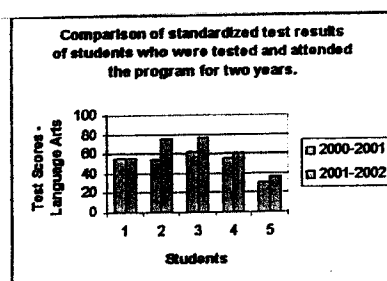
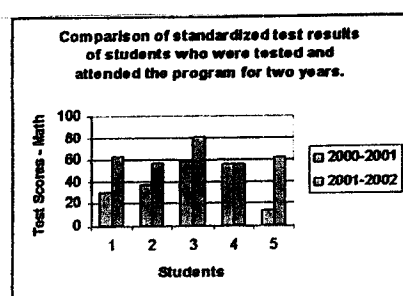
Staff members are encouraged, then empowered to be creative in helping to accomplish the mission of *helping to transition students towards productive independence*. Project teams are assembled for each task. Interest, past experience and specific skills are considered when putting the teams together to help insure its' overall success. Proposals are presented to the group, suggestions for improvement are solicited

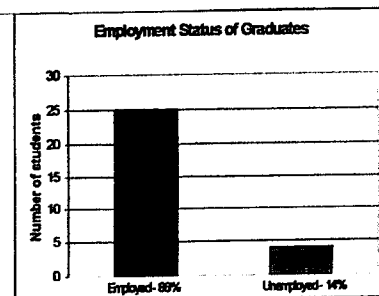
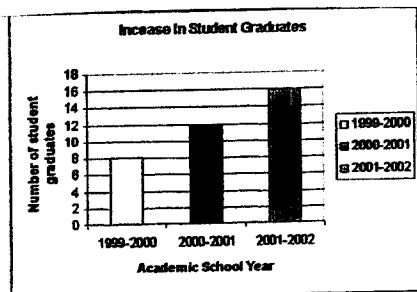
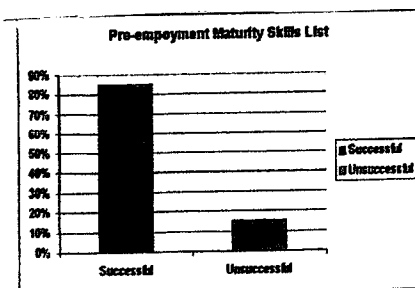
and the following ideas have been implemented using this approach: café construction, college partnership programs, intergenerational community service projects, alternative school coalition activities, school/business partnerships, VFW enrichment trips, in-house/in-service ideas, radio station partnership, interscholastic sports program, occupational training programs and the garnering of \$175,000 in grant money demonstrates innovative educational leadership strategies in empowering the whole school community to perform at its' optimum level. The key to success is the capacity to harness everyone's talents and interests while leveraging them with community partners and funding opportunities in order to stretch the school's educational resources and students' safety net.

4. Describe the school's overall approach to assessment. How are your methods aligned to the specialization or whole-school reform model? How are you ensuring that the content you are measuring is consistent with the Core Content Curriculum Standards? Provide student performance data for the school years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 using state tests and, if you wish, national and/or district standardized norm-reference tests, criterion reference tests, and/or alternative assessments. Explain any dramatic increase or decrease. Specify which groups, if any, are excluded from assessments for which you provide data. Give the percentage of students excluded. You may wish to use a chart.

The school uses a more holistic assessment to determine the success its' programs. Success occurs after students get clean & sober, see meaning to their school experience and re-engage in academic and workplace learning activities. Included in the assessment process are the following: standardized *Terra Nova* academic tests; excluding 10% of classified students determined by the youth study team; *WIB Pre-employment/Work Maturity Skills List*; monitoring of out-of school suspensions; drug screening; number of students staying in school and meeting the graduation requirements and post secondary follow-up on graduates who are currently employed:

Review of the following statistical data help to validate overall student success rate:





5. Describe collaborative efforts with families, businesses, the community, school districts, and/or higher education that contribute to a school environment governed by the students' needs and promoting high student achievement.

Over the past four years annual advisory committees have been formed consisting of parents, teachers, students, business representatives and community service providers. The group meets periodically throughout the year and assesses students' needs and plans corresponding activities to meet those needs such as the following:

- ❖ Implementation of a modified version of the *Supermarket Careers Program* with a twelve thousand dollar donation of equipment, materials and stock from the Wakefern Corporation in order to transform a small, antiquated cafeteria into a student operated school-based café business.
- ❖ A school/business project Parisian Café utilized for a community coffeehouse with five thousand dollars donation from the local businesses community
- ❖ College partnership with Rowan University for Project Adventure team building activities, Stockton College for performing arts enrichment and with Atlantic Cape Community College for providing college level classes
- ❖ Horticulture program partnership with Patcong Farms, providing a weekly training facility for students and staff and intergenerational school projects
- ❖ Annual senior citizen Valentines Luncheon with school/business sponsorship
- ❖ Shoprite Supermarket partnership, training student workers for retail food jobs
- ❖ Healthcare Job Shadowing Project with the Atlantic City Medical Center
- ❖ Hospitality/Tourism Job Shadowing program with TRUMP Properties
- ❖ Casino Occupational Training with Tropicana and Bally's Corporation
- ❖ Sponsorship of a network of local school district alternative, extension and regional transition education programs dedicated to serving the needs of Southern New Jersey youth through a variety of educational, cultural and workplace readiness activities. The goal of the coalition is to unite, share ideas, collaborate on special projects and grow together, providing the best possible education for at risk students
- ❖ Partnership with the local Work Investment Board through a grant providing funding for workplace readiness activities, hourly stipends and after-school drug, alcohol and family counseling
- ❖ Partnerships with the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for post secondary assistance
- ❖ Partnership with the local Education Foundation, providing parent input
- ❖ Local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post sponsors student/vet collaborative trips

The partnerships provide students with an understanding everyone is interconnected as members of a school, community, state, nation and human race. The community stakeholders are able to share in the noble effort of helping to *transition at risk youth to productive independence!*